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TEACHING AND RESEARCH IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Contributions to this Department will include material of three kinds: (1) original discussion, suggestion, plans, programs, and theories; (2) reports of special projects, working programs, conferences and meetings, and progress in any distinctive aspect of the field; (3) special results of study and research.

A PSYCHOLOGICAL REASON FOR THE LAG OF "NON-MATERIAL" CULTURE TRAITS

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THE distinction made by sociologists between the "material" and the "non-material" traits provides a rough classification of the different factors in a culture pattern.[1] For the sake of the argument to follow, we shall accept the distinction for its conceptual usefulness. Analyses of the comparative rate of change of these two types of culture traits has led various writers to the conclusion that on the whole there is a tendency for material changes to take place more rapidly, thus causing a cultural "lag" because of the disparity in rate of change.[2] Although explanations for resistance to general social change have been attempted in cultural, economic, geographical, biological, and psychological terms, satisfactory reasons for the differential rate of change of non-material traits are difficult to find. The reasons given are usually tenuous and vague. Thus Ogburn states that "the adoption of inventions in material culture will be somewhat earlier than changes in the non-material culture, and that obstacles to change are found in connection with non-material culture that are not found with the material culture."[3] We would like to know more specifically what some of these "obstacles to change" are.

Since the acceptance or rejection of any trait (either material or non-material) depends in the last analysis on the individuals who live within a culture area, an examination of the changes in these traits with reference to the psychology of personality may reveal at least one of the "obstacles" which are peculiar to the non-material traits. What, then, are the typical ways in which changes of material traits occur and how do these changes differ from those of non-material culture traits?

First of all it is apparent that material traits will be accepted if they are consonant with the prevailing value of the culture. For example, if a representative individual of the American culture pattern shares the contemporary high economic value which determines that he should gain satisfaction by displaying his wealth, we can imagine that, without the slightest

[1] *Cf.* Malcolm M. Willey, "Society and Its Cultural Heritage," in *Introduction to Sociology*, New York, 1927, p. 518; W. F. Ogburn, *Social Change*, New York, 1922.

[2] *Cf.* Clark Wissler, *Man and Culture*, New York, 1923; Ogburn, *op. cit.*

[3] Ogburn, *op. cit.*, p. 275.

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re-ordering of personal values, he would readily replace a fine chaise with an automobile and later change the automobile for an airplane as these new material traits are introduced. The fine chaise, the automobile, and the airplane would all represent his dominant interest and the paramount value of his culture. However, if a new *non-material* trait were introduced which was not consistent with the general determining tendency it would probably be rejected. The individual would resist a new form of government such as Communism since it would mean a complete reorganization of the mental pattern characteristic of his personality.

Likewise *any* type of cultural value seems to determine the nature of the material traits which are accepted as elaborations of the existing culture pattern. In sixteenth century Florence new objects of art were greedily received by a culture predominantly aesthetic. Sparta, on the other hand, discouraged artistic endeavor and accepted only those material traits which conformed to her militaristic attitudes. For many centuries China has incorporated into its culture pattern numerous concrete expressions of filial piety. England readily adopted material traits which would satisfy and extend her commercial attitudes of the seventeenth century. Under the reign of Louis XIV, Versailles was flooded with symbols of luxury and magnificence, whereas in the Middle Ages complete abstinence from all forms of physical comfort and luxury was practised by different cultural groups.

New material traits, then, arising within or introduced into a culture will be rapidly accepted if they are consistent with existing attitudes and are therefore found to have positive value, whereas new material traits which satisfy other attitudes will be rejected or are less likely to be introduced. But new *non-material* traits are not usually consonant with prevailing attitudes. If a non-material trait is incorporated in a culture pattern, it must either supplant or modify a rigid, dynamic interest. And because new non-material traits necessitate a *change* of value rather than a mere *extension* in the range of inclusiveness of a value, they will be accepted slowly, if at all. The great resistances to culture change seem to be largely explicable in terms of the characteristics of the general attitudes built up in any given social era. The numerous provincial religious attitudes pervading Egyptian culture in the fourteenth century B.C. would not yield to Ikhnaton's new religious conceptions in spite of the propaganda and force used to promulgate them. The many warnings of Isocrates were rejected because of the rigid attitudes of local patriotism generated in the Greek city states. Since introductions of conflicting non-material traits necessitate a re-ordering of the fundamental values that compose the "inner" life of men and since the very characteristics of these values seem inimical to change, it is not surprising that changes in non-material traits are relatively slow. Ikhnaton, Socrates, Christ, Joan of Arc, Rousseau, Marx, and modern social reformers have attempted to change ingrained patterns of personality, whereas the creators of new *material* traits have usually suggested only more efficient or more elaborate ways in which existing attitudes may find expression. And such innovations in material traits do not necessarily require any change of attitude.

The interpretation that new material traits are readily admitted into a culture if they give concrete expression to prevailing values and that new non-material traits are only gradually accepted because of the rigidity of pre-existing values, is confirmed by recent laboratory investigation concerned with the qualitative nature of

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attitudes.[4] In spite of the confusion in the definitions of "attitude," research has demonstrated that there are definite characteristics of attitudes. We find that attitudes (1) may be general and pervasive; (2) that the *general* determining tendencies are more constant and enduring than the *specific* attitudes; and (3) that a general attitude seems to serve as a dynamic or at least as a determinative influence upon more specific attitudes and reactions.[5] Thus an individual may have a *general* aesthetic attitude which will *determine* his reactions in specific situations and which will be more *difficult to change* than some less general disposition.

The *pervasiveness* of attitudes has been illustrated in numerous quantitative studies.[6] Vetter, for example, has found that a liberal attitude is reflected consistently by an individual in various types of social situations.[7] The assumption in most scales for measuring attitudes is that there are various ways in which a general determining tendency may exert a *directive influence* and that any activity in which a characteristic attitude is manifested may be thought of as consistent and harmonious with personality. The validity of this assumption has been experimentally established.

The *enduring quality* of general attitudes has also been demonstrated. Investigation on the relative constancy of general attitudes and specific content has shown that a general attitude remains comparatively constant over a period of time while specific content which refers to that attitude is usually different at various times. Experiments have also shown that general impressions are more frequently recalled than specific references.

These characteristics of attitudes would seem to give a valid psychological explanation for the relatively slow change in nonmaterial culture traits. If general attitudes are *constant* they will not readily yield to change; if they are *pervasive* they may be expressed in numerous ways; if they are *dynamic* then specific attitudes toward specific situations will be consistent with the broader pattern of mental life; and if a new material trait is introduced into a culture, it will be accepted in so far as it is in harmony with the dominant values of that culture.

Wide differences exist, of course, in both the quality and intensity of individual attitudes. However, these differences must be conceived of as differences existing *within* a given culture. If we regard attitudes as cumulations of specific thought processes stimulated by cultural surroundings, then the attitudes of all individuals who live in a given culture pattern will be determined by the characteristic values of that particular culture. This influence of culture attitudes in determining individual attitudes seems sociologically unques-

[4] Although the concept of *attitude* is "ill-defined, and as employed by various writers refers to determining tendencies that range in inclusiveness from the *Aufgabe* to the *Weltanschauung*" (*Cf.* G. W. Allport, "What Is a Trait of Personality," *Jl. of Abn. and Soc. Psychol.*, XXV, 368, 1931) there is in most definitions of the term a *subjective* reference to some type of determining tendency. We shall therefore consider attitude as *mental Struktur* rather than as a form of action or expression such as a habit. Since expressive movements are held to be bio-physical rather than bio-social products, the sociologist seeking an explanation of cultural change may perhaps most fruitfully turn to the more *socially* determined "elements" of personality, namely, attitudes.

[5] These and other characteristics of attitudes have been determined by the writer (*Cf.* General and Specific Attitudes, *Psychological Monograph*, XLII, no. 192, 1932). Experimental evidence for the pervasive, enduring, and dynamic nature of attitudes referred to will be found in this study.

[6] *Cf.* Read Bain, "Theory and Measurement of Attitudes and Opinions," *Psychol. Bull.*, XXVII, 357–379, 1930.

[7] G. B. Vetter, "Measurement of Social and Political Attitudes," *Jl. of Abn. and Soc. Psychol.*, XXV, 149–189, 1930.

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tioned. Thus MacIver states "that certain attitudes characterize whole groups, tribal, local, racial, national, and so forth, towards other groups. These attitudes are sustained and perpetuated within the mores of the groups, being in large part confirmed in each member by the social influences which bear upon him."[8] There are, then, broad differences in the prevailing attitudes of cultures as well as individual differences of attitudes within a culture and the attitudes of an individual are necessarily rated *with preference to* the cultural norm. Thus a person with an intense religious attitude today might well have been classified as only ordinarily religious had he lived under the reign of Pope Gregory VII or in thirteenth century Italy. Likewise a modern conservative might have appeared thoroughly liberal in the society represented by John Cotton.

The non-material traits in a society do change, then, however slowly. Although we are interested here primarily in the disparity between the rate of material and non-material change, a few reasons, based on the nature of attitudes, may be suggested for the shift in non-material traits. (1) Certain new non-material traits which agree with pre-existing general attitudes are soon adopted by a culture and thereby extend or intensify the prevailing values. Thus the commercial attitudes which were aroused in sixteenth century Spain and England were favorably received since they enhanced the existing nationalistic attitudes. Americans are captivated by new attitudes suggesting a "business" government; and modern Russia accepts the American attitudes toward efficiency and machine technique since they aid in fulfilling the general Soviet ideals. (2) New attitudes may be rapidly assumed by the discontented members of a society if the prevailing cultural values are the cause of the unrest. These dissatisfied individuals may then organize themselves around the new attitudes which are then likely to become institutionalized. The growth and spread of Christianity and Communism seem to illustrate this type of change. (3) New material traits introduced into a culture may readily show an easier, more efficient way of life and cause a consequent change of cultural forms which will be more in harmony with the new cultural contents. The spread of machine civilization in Japan and the acceptance of certain corollary Western values exemplifies this way of change. (4) Education and (5) propaganda may gradually produce the infiltration of new attitudes to the members of a society.

WAS THE AMERICAN CONFLICT A WAR BETWEEN STATES?

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UNTIL anger had somewhat abated in the North, the victors in the war of 1861 insisted that the clash of arms should be called the War of the Rebellion. In fact they wrote the ugly word rebellion in the official records. In vain the South protested, insisting that the term was offensive. The war was not a rebellion but a civil conflict. At length the North yielded the point. The Civil War, it should be called.

In the meantime, however, an old

[8] R. M. MacIver, *Society: Its Structure and Change*, New York, 1931, p. 45.

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